

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**The Status of the Claims**

21. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a virtual private network, comprising the steps of:

(a) performing a number identifier operation ~~on a virtual private network call by~~ at a service switching point of a first carrier based on an originating number of a call without contacting a service control point; and

~~(b) when the number identifier operation indicates the originating number belongs to a predetermined set of originating numbers, routing the virtual private network call from the service switching point of the first carrier over a private line to a switch of an intermediate carrier; and~~

when the number identifier operation indicates the originating number does not belong to the predetermined set of originating numbers, routing the call from the service switching point of the first carrier to the switch of the intermediate carrier over a line different from the private line.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, further including the steps of comprising: (e) routing the ~~virtual private network~~ call from ~~a second~~ the switch of the intermediate carrier to a service switching point of a terminating carrier.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, wherein ~~step (e)~~ routing the call from the switch of the intermediate carrier to the service

switching point of the terminating carrier further ~~includes the step of~~  
~~comprises, (e1)~~ when the originating number and a destination number of the  
call both belong to the set of originating numbers, routing the virtual private  
network call over a private line.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, ~~wherein step (a)~~  
~~further includes the steps of comprising:~~ (a1) receiving [[a]] the originating  
number at the service switching point of the first carrier.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, ~~wherein step (b)~~  
~~further includes the steps of comprising:~~ (b1) sending the a query from the  
switch of the intermediate carrier to the service switching a service control  
point.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~21~~ 24, ~~wherein step~~  
~~(b) further includes the steps of comprising:~~ (b1) receiving a plain old  
telephone number translation of a dialed number from the service control  
point.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, ~~wherein step~~  
~~(b) further includes the steps of comprising:~~ (b1) receiving [[a]] billing  
information.

28. (Currently Amended) A virtual private network, comprising:  
a first private virtual network in a first LATA;

a second private virtual network in a second LATA; and

an intermediate carrier switch routing a call between the first private virtual network and the second private virtual network when a service control point determines the call requires routing between the first private virtual network and the second private virtual network, wherein, when a number identifier operation performed at a service switching point in the first LATA indicates an originating number of the call belongs to a set of originating numbers, the first private virtual network is coupled to the intermediate carrier switch over a private line, and, when the number identifier operation indicates the originating number does not belong to the set of originating numbers, the first private virtual network is coupled to the intermediate carrier switch over a public line.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Original) The network of claim 28, wherein the second private virtual network is coupled to the intermediate carrier over a private line.

31. (Original) The network of claim 28 wherein the call is initiated by dialing four digits.